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Victoria Street Newz

December 2007

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the
news
that
fits,
we
print”*

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Vol. 4 No. 9

peacetime. right ?

Know Your Rights

submitted by George Simich

*I downloaded this from the UN website ... it is
important for everyone to have a copy of this
Declaration for reference. There are far too many
times when these rights are undermined by the
very people entrusted to protect them.*

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last
story cont'd on page 3

Build social housing units, United Nations representative tells Canada

by Jean Swanson & Wendy Pedersen

United Nations Special Rapporteur on Housing, Miloon Kothari, says Canada should “once again embark on a large scale building of social housing units across the country” for a period of ten years. Kothari made his remarks in a preliminary report, after touring Canada for 2 weeks.

On this U.N. mission, Kothari says he “heard of hundreds of people who have died as a direct result of Canada’s nation-wide housing crisis.” Kothari said it was “shocking” to see the number of homeless people in Canada and to see the housing and homelessness conditions faced by Aboriginal people on and off reserve. Noting that the federal government has had multi-billion dollar surpluses every year since 1998, and that CMHC, the national housing agency, has a surplus of almost \$1 billion, Kothari said the housing crisis was “even more striking.”

The report includes Kothari’s preliminary observations. An official report will be presented to the United Nations Human Rights Council next year.

Kothari also called on our governments to implement a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy, and noted that “grossly inadequate social assistance rates are trapping many of the lowest income Canadian households into chronic poverty and inadequate housing.”

When Kothari was in Vancouver on October 16th, representatives from the Carnegie Community Action Project (CCAP) and other groups and individuals met with him to describe the housing and homelessness situation in Vancouver and the Downtown Eastside. CCAP coordinator Jean Swanson, pointing out that both the federal and provincial governments have huge surpluses that they refuse to spend on affordable non market housing, asked Kothari if he could arrange to get foreign aid to build housing in the Downtown Eastside.

When Monte Paulsen, contributing Editor of the Tyee asked Kothari about CCAP’s request for foreign aid, Kothari replied: “I think its a valid request... The governments at all levels have failed to meet the needs.... Whether we can do anything with that request is difficult to say.”

“There are very serious housing needs in this country that have been unmet. And while Canada contributes to support housing or post-tsunami or other crises around the world, they also need to turn inward and look with open eyes at what is happening here.”

The preliminary Report is published at relativenewz.ca

HOMELESS PERSONS’ MEMORIAL DAY

www.nationalhomeless.org

Homeless people die from illnesses that affect everyone,
frequently without health care.

Homeless people die from exposure,
unprotected from the heat and cold.

Homeless people die from violence,
often in unprovoked hate crimes.

Health care is a human right.

Housing is a human right.

Physical safety is a human right.

Remember our neighbors
and friends who have died
without homes.

Remember why they died.



DECEMBER 21

The First Day of Winter. The Longest Night of the Year.

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“Building Bridges
within our Downtown Community”

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Victoria Street Newz welcomes written submissions including interviews, event reviews, cartoons, poetry, photographs, or artwork, but we can't guarantee everything will be published. We reserve the right to edit, and will not print anything libelous, racist, sexist, or homophobic.

Letters sent to the editor are assumed to be for publication, must include phone number or email (if possible, for confirmation) and may be edited for length. You can publish using a pseudonym, or anonymously.

We are devoted to a triple bottom line philosophy - concerned about our environmental and social, as well as financial well-being.

You can contribute to social change by supporting the Victoria Street Newz team, by reading information that informs you about poverty issues, and by working for progressive, peaceful, non-violent change.

Opinions expressed in this newspaper are not necessarily those of Victoria Street Newz, the editors, advertisers, contributors, readers, or publishers.

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JUST ANOTHER RANT

at night, before i drift off to sleepy-land, i thank the universe for the food in my tummy and the roof over my head. i can do the work i do, on a low income, because i have cheap rent. and, lucky for me, i don't live in a dive. i don't have to deal with mice and, although i complain because the rent has been increasing every year these last few, there's an elevator repair guy around now and then and the roof doesn't leak and, although it's not perfect, it could certainly be worse. i have a lot to be thankful for.

if i didn't have cheap rent i'd be begging for money a lot more often than i do. we're all beggars, eh? (a really genuine thank you to those who respond when i put my hands out.) the truth is, i'd rather be a beggar of any description than end up humiliating myself the way that woman did in the bathroom at the bus/train station in vancouver the other night when i arrived here. i can't believe that one of the first things i saw when i got to vancouver, to look after emmy the dog and her condo, was a woman in a very mini mini-skirt, and no undies, bending over away from me.

actually, that's a lie. (but no matter what i write from here on, someone's bound to read it) the truth is, i don't really know whether she had undies on or not (and i didn't stick around to find out). the first time i saw the woman she was 'fixing her face,' or something, in the bathroom at the train station. i waited while she moved her shopping cart, which was blocking the entrance way, and when i saw that the stalls were full and the floor flooded, i moved past her again to go outside to wait for my new doggie client/friend who i'd arranged to meet at the station. it was then that the bathroom woman bent over to get something out of her cart. luckily i'd splurged and taken the pcl bus off the ferry, rather than the more time consuming city buses, so my bathroom requirements weren't any sort of an emergency and i was able to hastily leave that bathroom and the unfortunate woman.

the thing about patriarchy is that it thrives on things like that woman bending over with no undies. which woman, you might ask? who cares, as long as some woman somewhere is doing it - the patriarchy thinks, but doesn't dare speak - because as long as some woman somewhere is willing to sell her self, the capitalist system is alive and thriving.

isn't the free market wonderful?!?! it provides the ultimate reason for money - unassailable sex.

some women actually choose poverty, rather than offering their



by Janine Bandcroft



bodies or pornography, in light of any real options. and some of those are lucky enough to end up in loving relationships with free (and hopefully clean) sex. i suppose, for those who choose the other route, poverty might eventually choose them, if their only beggable offering is sex. free market capitalism ostensibly thrives on competition, though those who've tried to compete with corporations for market share or, i suppose, with youth for sex sales, might disagree. what happens if, after all that social interaction, a woman finds she's contracted some awful disease and it's a challenge to find *any* sex after the wrinkles and saggiess sets in? i suppose, after

doling it out in unfathomable ways to unimaginable people, the no sex option might offer a pleasant retirement.

i'm a feminist concerned about the objectification of the earth and all her resources, a process that encourages us to regard everything as a commodity, and ultimately leads to the sale of any and every thing. am i meant to take comfort in the idea of legalized brothels, so women who 'choose' prostitution and pornography might have a safe place to function as capitalists? perhaps i will (take comfort, that is) if it means the woman and her underwear (or lack thereof) will be somewhere other than in my face.

i don't know what'll happen the day i'm no longer able to afford habitation in my wonderful little shared space in victoria - and there's no reason to think that day will not arrive. but for now i'm happy to glance now and then at the north shore mountains (what remains of them) out the window of this temporary vancouver abode, and count my blessings. i'm do know that i, personally, will better live with myself taking my chances on the streets, rather than seeking comfort from anonymous sex.

thank goodness for cheap rent, my doggie clients, the homes they trust me with, and independence.

and thanks to george, in nanaimo, for suggesting we print the united nations declaration on human rights. it's an incredible document. unfortunately, it doesn't seem to include women, who fought and won the right for women to be recognized as humans back at the turn of the 20th century. quit nitpicking, some might say, of course they mean 'she' when they say 'he.' but if they mean to include both he and she, i suggest, why don't they just say 'she'? after all, 'she' includes 'he' whereas 'he' has a rather extensive history of domination, including witch burning, and isn't the first word i think of to express inclusivity. aside from that, it's a lovely document.



OPINION

Our duty is more than just remembrance

by Sue Stroud

I think we likely all agree that those who serve in the military deserve to be 'honoured' for their sacrifices. But maybe we don't always understand that that means we must ensure they receive all the health care and other social supports they might need for however long they need it. Maybe we forget that they have left behind families in need of housing, comfort and care.

Today 1 out of every 4 homeless men in the US is a veteran (there are, as yet, no stats on homeless female veterans).

In 2004 there were 1.8 million veterans and their families (another 3.8 million people) without medical coverage in the US. In Canada most veterans are not in that kind of trouble yet, but the situation is worsening.

Rightly or wrongly our military men and women have been sent by our government into danger. They go because they believe it is their duty. They go because they believe they and their families will be taken good care of whatever happens.

Unfortunately our government doesn't reciprocate that same sense of duty. Today a new ombudsman begins his job fighting for the care and attention veterans and their families need. He says he is expecting 5,000 complaints a year. That's a lot of people having problems with their government after having served their country dutifully. That's a lot of families left high and dry after losing a loved one.

I don't support our role in Afghanistan. I don't believe in

the Arctic sovereignty military build-up or in our government's attempts to militarize us, to restrict our freedoms, to make us afraid of the rest of the people on this earth and to destroy our environment to supply the military and fill the pockets of the already overly rich and greedy bankers and corporate executives.

But I do believe hat our rank and file military folk do what they do out of a sense of duty to their country and their fellow citizens. They and their families deserve our support.

We are all going to have to be alert and help wherever we can. As long as we have a government that simply does whatever the US tells it to do we will have to stand up for people in trouble and that includes veterans.

Sue Stroud, Brentwood Bay BC



resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, therefore, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1 - All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2 - Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3 - Everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person.

Article 4 - No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5 - No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6 - Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7 - All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8 - Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9 - No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10 - Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair, and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11

1. Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.
2. No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12 - No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.
2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14

1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15

1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16

1. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17

1. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18 - Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19 - Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22 - Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and

his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24 - Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27

1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28 - Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29

1. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
2. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

3. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30 - Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The Declaration was ratified with a count of 48 votes to none with only 8 abstentions. Following this historic act the Assembly called upon all Member countries to publicize the text of the Declaration and “to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories.” In addition to the fact that Canadian John Humphrey played a significant role in drafting the Declaration, the UDHR is also significant to Canadians because the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms echoes many of the principles upheld by the Declaration. A strong correlation between both texts is proof of this. For more information: www.unac.org and www.charterofrights.ca.

READ THIS FIRST

....

With election years on the horizon, Street Newz will be careful to balance the need to share important election related information with our collective decision not to endorse or promote any single political party or representative.

That said, many Canadians are concerned about the implications of trade agreements like the TILMA (between Alberta and BC), and the SPP (Security and Prosperity Partnership) currently being negotiated between Canada, the USA, and Mexico. Some say these agreements will offer inequitable opportunities for corporate interests while disregarding the rights of citizens. Of primary concern is the lack of democratic process - treaties are being drafted and signed without consulting the citizenry. There has been no debate in Parliament, no referendum, and very little corporate media coverage of the true implications of these corporate/government agreements.

Street Newz is publishing info from the Council of Canadians, a petition from the Canadian Action Party, and a citizen’s letter. Why not investigate, inform yourself, & take whatever action you feel is appropriate.

A LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister Harper:

Do you remember when you were a young lad how your enthusiasm for a particular activity would often prompt your parents to say, “That’s enough, Stephen!”?

That is what I am saying to you now. That’s enough, Stephen!

Canada has been without a clearly defined energy policy for far too long. It is time you and your NEW government acted and established one.

You continue to torment Canadians by NOT declaring water as a human right. Do it now!

When your NEW government, and its controversial policies, are demonstrated against, the buck stops on YOUR desk. It certainly IS enough when police are used to try to create a mob scene as was the case recently in Montebello.

You canvassed with one of your planks being greater transparency in government. Where is the transparency in the way you are negotiating the details of the Security and Prosperity Partnership for North America behind closed doors with no members of the media present, the public shut out, and with no debate in parliament? Yet you have Tom d’Aquino and members of his Council of Chief Executive Officers present. Where is the democracy there?

Fast losing respect,
Don Parker,
Ontario.

Just say no to the SPP

Five reasons to oppose the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America

from the Council of Canadians - www.canadians.org

The Security and Prosperity Partnership is such a big agreement, with so many policy recommendations in so many areas, that it sometimes feels like we need a ten-page essay to fully explain why it is such a rotten deal for Canada. But it isn’t really all that complicated. The Council of Canadians opposes the SPP for five main reasons related to its impact on democracy, water, energy, military and foreign policy, and the real security of citizens across the continent.

1. The SPP is anti-democratic

The SPP is the political manifestation of a corporate plan for economic and security integration that was never voted on in any country. Big business lobbies like the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE) drafted almost all of the SPP’s 300 initiatives and they continue to be the only Canadian group with any input into the SPP. In May 2006, Prime Minister Stephen Harper put 10 members of the CCCE onto a permanent high-level advisory board called the North American Competitiveness Council (NACC). This group has been asked to “prioritize the priorities” in the SPP and to “drive change.” Meanwhile, the public and most of our publicly elected officials have been left out of the picture completely.

2. The SPP is a waste of energy

Energy is arguably the sticky goo holding the SPP together. Canada and Mexico have agreed to give U.S. oil companies an even tighter grip of both countries’ resouces in return for vague assurances that the U.S. won’t shut the border to our goods. In Canada, that means guaranteeing a fivefold increase in tar sands production, no matter what the consequences for the environment and public health – and even if it makes greenhouse gas reductions impossible. Pipelines are under construction to ship raw bitumen out of Alberta and to U.S. refineries, which means we’re not even securing any jobs out of this energy fire sale. In Mexico, while their oil and gas industry is miraculously still state-owned, the corporate lobby behind the SPP is pushing for privatization. Clearly, this “partnership” is about U.S. energy security at the expense of Canadian and Mexican jobs and the environment, and is therefore an incredible waste of energy for Canada.

3. The SPP will lead to bulk water exports

An SPP roundtable on the “Future of the North American Environment” on April 27, 2007 in Calgary discussed “water consumption, water transfers and artificial diversions of bulk water,” with the aim of achieving “joint optimum utilization of the available [North American] water.” The meeting was part of the White House-funded North American Future 2025 Project that has Canadian government backing as a venue “to help guide the ongoing Security and Prosperity Partnership,” according to

a CanWest news article. “It’s no secret that the U.S. is going to need water,” project leader Armand Peschard-Sverdrup told the Ottawa Citizen. “It’s no secret that Canada is going to have an overabundance of water. At the end of the day, there may have to be arrangements.” Those “arrangements” are clearly being discussed behind closed doors and must cease immediately.

4. The SPP makes Canadians less secure

Joint Canada-U.S. no-fly lists, exclusive airport service for “trusted travelers,” and racially based immigration policies that criminalize people from “high risk” countries. These are among a few of the extremely disturbing “security” measures contained in the SPP. The simple fact that Maher Arar is still on the U.S. no-fly list, despite exoneration and a formal apology from the RCMP and our federal government, is proof that none of these measures can make Canadians any safer. In fact, they increase the insecurity of thousands of people who may be banned from flying, unnecessarily detained, or even deported because of where they were born or with whom they associate.

5. The SPP ties us to the U.S. “war on terror”

The SPP ties Canada even closer to a militaristic U.S. government and will inevitably erode any differences that currently exist between our two countries’ foreign and defence policies. Already we see Canada amplifying its role in Afghanistan and advertising the fact on billboards in Washington, D.C. We see a shift in stance on Middle East issues with Canada backing the U.S. position every time. And we see the big business lobby continuing to push Canada to sign on to missile defence and create a joint military command for all of North America. This is all despite public opinion polls on the Department of Foreign Affairs website showing that 83 per cent of Canadians would rather that we forge an independent foreign policy – despite the negative consequences it might have on trade with the U.S.

It’s time to put an end to the SPP!

The Council of Canadians demands that Canada cease all talks leading toward deeper integration between Canada and the United States. At the very least, we must bring the SPP to the House of Commons for a full debate. We must also disband the North American Competitiveness Council and consult with Canadians in a meaningful and participatory way on Canada-U.S. relations. The majority of Canadians would prefer a “Sovereignty and Justice Partnership” with the United States, which protects Canada’s energy and water, preserves an independent foreign policy, and addresses real security concerns instead of the fantasies of the Bush administration.

Sign a SPP Petition and Call for Full Disclosure

To Prime Minister Stephen Harper, cc. Stéphane Dion, Jack Layton, Gilles Duceppe.

We, the people of Canada, demand that you fully disclose the details of the Security and Prosperity Partnership Agreement and all other secret agreements and ratifications relative to any proposed integration of trade, security and armed forces with the United States and immediately place a moratorium on any further development of such plans and abrogate any agreements made to date pending a decision by a nationwide Referendum on these issues.

The Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) of North America was initiated on March 31, 2005 by the leaders of Canada, the United States and Mexico to combine free trade as a hostage to security cooperation but cannot be allowed to go forward unless ratified by all the citizens of Canada in a free vote..

In particular, we demand that our national security policies be defined by Canadians on behalf of and for the benefit of Canadians.

Our security would be better served if we disassociate ourselves from the U.S. “war on terror”.

WE ARE A SEPARATE, INDEPENDENT NATION AND IT IS THE PEOPLE WHO MUST DECIDE THEIR FUTURE!

() Yes I support The Petition *

Contact Information. Please sign below or go on line to www.canadianactionparty.ca/petition1.html

First Name * _____

Last Name* _____

Street Address* _____

City* _____ Province * _____

_____ Postal Code* _____

Signature* _____

*Required Input

Mail to. Canadian Action Party, #385-916 West Broadway Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 1K7

Ph. PST (604) 708-3372
E-mail info@canadianactionparty.ca



The Council of Canadians is an independent, non-partisan public interest organization. The Council does not accept money from corporations, political parties or governments, and is sustained entirely by the volunteer energy and financial assistance of its members.

Left With No Right To Vote

from the British Columbia Public Interest Advocacy Centre

The universal right of Canadian citizens to vote is being eroded. Bill C-31 has just finished making its way through the House of Commons. We expect that it will clear the Senate quickly and soon become law. We believe that it will deprive many Canadian citizens of the right to vote in federal elections. We are preparing a legal challenge to the amendments.

New Voter ID Rules

We are concerned about new, mandatory voter identification rules. Even if you are registered on the voters’ list and have a voter card, you will not be permitted to vote unless you can produce the required ID.

You will have to produce either one piece of government-issued ID with your photograph and current address; or two pieces of ID from a list which will be issued by Elections Canada.

Except for a driver licence or BC ID (which costs \$35 and can take 6 weeks to obtain), hardly any forms of government-issued ID, that most people might own, have their photo and address. For example, a passport does not come with your address printed on it. And as far as the Elections Canada list is concerned, we have no idea what will be included and many people’s right to vote will depend on how broad a list they produce.

If you don’t have the mandatory ID, the only way you can receive a ballot and cast a vote is if you swear an oath and produce another voter to vouch for you, who: has the required ID, lives in your own little polling district, and has not vouched for anyone else. (So your neighbour cannot vouch for both you and your partner, for instance).

When a committee of the House of Commons was coming up with these changes, Canada’s Chief Electoral Officer testified that there is no evidence that there is any problem with voter fraud that needs fixing. When we appeared before the Committee, they told us that the entire purpose of the changes was to address a political problem.

It is interesting to note that in the recent US mid-term elections, many Republican-dominated states adopted exactly these kinds of voter ID rules (federal voting there is set by the state legislatures) in an attempt to make it harder for groups who tend to lean toward the Democrats to vote. These laws were struck down by the courts in several states.

Interference with Democratic Rights

The right to vote is one of the most fundamental of all the rights we have as Canadian citizens. The development of a universal franchise for citizens was a long, hard struggle, as poor people, women, racialized people, First Nations people, and people with mental health issues finally won the right to participate in our democracy. For reasons of political expediency, the government (supported by the Liberal party and the Bloc Quebecois) wants to impose restrictions on our ability to vote. And these restrictions will affect some groups more than others.

Indigenous people did not have the right to vote in Canada until 1960. Indigenous people have the highest poverty rate in Canada, and are therefore likely to be disproportionately affected by the legislation.

In some communities, like the Downtown Eastside, many people have difficulty obtaining and keeping ID. And obviously, homeless people cannot produce ID with their address. In past elections, squads of lawyers have helped hundreds of people to get registered to vote by swearing affidavits to identify them. The new rules would eliminate this solution.

New Canadians may face added difficulties in meeting the identification requirements, including language barriers, more recent addresses, and less access to eligible registered voters to vouch for them.

People who have fled or are living in abusive situations may not have access to their identification documents.

Transgendered people may not have identification that corresponds with their gender or perceived gender or current appearance. This could cause difficulties at polling stations. In addition, the requirement to show identification could discourage people from attending to vote in the first place.

People who are more likely to move around tenants, for instance, those living in poverty, and students often do not own ID with their current address, and are less likely to know someone in their immediate neighbourhood who is eligible to vouch for them.

Our Legal Challenge

We believe that the amendments violate the Charter of Rights. Section 3 says every citizen has the right to vote in a federal or provincial election. The government has to justify any rules that interfere with anyone’s ability to exercise that right. Political expediency is not a legal justification.

Section 15 of the Charter guarantees equal protection and benefit of the law. The amendments would erode hard-won democratic rights and single out particular groups in the way they would interfere with the right to vote.

We hope to get our case into court before the next federal election (though that will depend partly on how soon one is called).

We need to talk to community representatives about how the changes could affect the people they speak for, about what kinds of evidence we can obtain, and about which groups and individuals might be the most appropriate to select to be named as parties to the court case.

For more information please contact the British Columbia Public Interest Advocacy Centre - Vancouver, BC Tel: (604) 687-3063 email: :bcpiac@bcpiac.com, www.bcpiac.com

One Person’s Garbage ...



By Silas Polkinghorne

A recent research project suggests Victoria could benefit by tapping into the talents of its binners.

Bidders, who collect recyclables and other materials, are performing a valuable public service by recovering resources and diverting waste from landfills, said Jutta Gutberlet, an assistant professor in the University of Victoria’s Department of Geography.

The Participatory Waste Management Project’s upcoming final report will make recommendations on ways to improve the livelihood of bidders and suggestions on ways the city can use binning to reduce waste and combat unemployment.

“Basically, I see it as an opportunity which the city is not yet tapping into,” said Gutberlet, whose research is focused on both sustainability and poverty reduction.

For the project, Gutberlet wanted to go directly to bidders to get a first-hand perspective. “[Bidders] know best, from inside-out,” she said. “I believe that only through the involvement of the people [directly] involved in the issue is it possible to achieve long-term, positive change.” Participatory research also means Gutberlet sees herself as a facilitator who connects academic knowledge with local expertise. In June, grad students and researchers in the Community-Based Research Lab (CBRL) met up with people in the binning community and created a small group of bidders. These bidders became researchers themselves and went to bottle depots to administer the survey to other bidders.

Bidders were asked about themselves, their binning activities and territories as well as the challenges they face in accessing services or facilities they need. Information was also gathered on homelessness, since the project is part of a larger, University of British Columbia-led initiative on that topic. In addition, interviews were conducted with government officials and workers at community agencies like Street Link.

CBRL then hosted a “community mapping event” in September where bidders gathered to discuss their work and document the areas they go, areas they like and areas they dislike. “We had maps all spread out,” explained Gutberlet. The information will be used to produce a brochure and map to be distributed to bidders. Gutberlet is fascinated by the two-fold nature of binning: it has potential to generate income for people while it can also help to reduce waste and recover resources.

Including bidders in resource recovery is a way for cities to reduce unemployment and save money. The more materials collected from garbage bins, the less it will cost the city to transport and store garbage, said Gutberlet.

She points to positive city-led initiatives like the one in the Brazilian city of Diadema. There, the city pays the bidders for the amount of materials recovered from the waste stream. Bidders receive what the city would otherwise be paying for the waste to be disposed of. The materials are collected by recycling co-operatives or non-profit associations and sold to industry.

Closer to home, a Vancouver program is underway that sees businesses sponsoring “urban binning units” that replace the shopping carts many bidders use to store and haul items. The units, which can be pulled by a bicycle, are lightweight and collapsible, are quieter than shopping carts, and also provide an opportunity for bidders to immediately earn a few extra dollars.

Awareness campaigns are also needed on Vancouver Island to encourage the general public to treat bidders with respect, Gutberlet said. “They are doing an environmental service.” While informal arrangements already exist between bidders and consumers who leave recyclables where bidders can find them, formal communication can help to coordinate these drop-off and pick-up points.

Gutberlet said she was shocked at the frequency of harassment reports from survey participants. When police or bylaw officers find bidders taking refundable bottles from Blue Box bins, bidders face fines and can have their bottles taken away.

Estimates put the number of bidders in Victoria at 150 or more. The final report of the Participatory Waste Management Project is expected early next year.

PBSC-UVic is a student organization that is not able to give legal advice. This article is intended as legal information only. Should you have a specific legal problem, it is advisable to consult a lawyer. Special thanks to Irene Faulkner for her assistance. For more information on our organization, please visit: www.pbsc-uvic.ca.

The UVic Chapter of Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC) wants to help answer some of your questions about the law. PBSC volunteers will produce a monthly article providing information on a particular legal issue. If you’d like to suggest a topic, please drop ideas off at Street Newz’s mailbox at 1027 Pandora Ave. or email us at pbsc.articles@gmail.com.



FEATURE:

The American Taliban -
The end of their world and they know it.

by George Simich



For the record, we are a-theists or secular humanists; we admit to our bias. As a-theists and secular humanists, we support and advocate for social and economic justice, human rights, environmental sustainability, secular laws and institutions, free speech, freedom of religion, the legalization of marijuana, a woman’s right to choose, the abolition of nuclear armaments, gun control, and the separation of church and state. Although we do not share theocratic or religious beliefs, we respect their right to believe as they will; and they must respect our right not to share those beliefs.

Unlike the following theocons (coined by Damon Linker in The Theocons: Secular America Under Siege), we hate no one, not even the academically, philosophically challenged persons quoted below, who we think are about three Hail, Marys! short of redemption. We wish no harm to anyone; and we think all fundamental absolutism abdicates its ethical responsibilities.

Atheists and secular humanists need to expose these theocons, and undermine every attempt they make to impose their irrational ideologies on our most vulnerable citizens—our and their children. As Richard Dawkins cogently noted, there are no Christian children, Islamic children, Jewish children, Hindi children, or Sikh children, or any religious children for that matter. Freedom from religion should be a child’s inalienable right, as it should be for everyone. Robert T. Lee of the Society for the Practical Establishment of the Ten Commandments argued, “Raising your children under Americanism or any other principles other than true Christianity is child abuse.” However, it would seem more likely that the opposite holds true. Religious indoctrination of children is a kind of child abuse, because it does not open doors to thought and wonder, but slams them shut.

Our differences signify the complexity of cultural evolutionary processes and pressures as they manifest themselves in-the-world. Six and one half billion egos think and act independently, as well as collectively; culture is both personal and public. And all of us know that no one certainly knows. The following comments are untenable and unacceptable, but they are typical; and if the following comments do not offend you, then, “Houston, we have a problem.”

That Good Ol’ Theocon¹ Rant:

Randall Terry (Operation Rescue): “I want you to just let a wave of intolerance wash over. I want you to let a wave of hatred wash over you. Yes, hate is good... Our goal is a Christian nation. We have a biblical duty, we are called by God to conquer this country. We don’t want equal time. We don’t want pluralism.”

Bob Dornan (Rep. R-CA): “Don’t use the word ‘gay’ unless it’s an acronym for ‘Got Aids Yet’”

Ann Coulter (Lawyer & Writer): “We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity. We weren’t punctilious about locating and punishing only Hitler and his top officers. We carpet-bombed German cities; we killed civilians. That’s war. And this is war.”

Fred Phelps (Westboro Baptist Church): “American Veterans are to blame for the fag takeover of this nation. They have the power in their political lobby to influence the zeitgeist², get the fags out of the military, and back in the closet where they belong!”

George H. W. Bush (President of the United States): “I don’t know that atheists should be considered citizens, nor should they be considered patriots. This is one nation under God.”

George W. Bush (President of the United States): “God told me to strike at al Qaida and I struck them, and then he instructed me to strike at Saddam, which I did, and now I am determined to solve the problem in the Middle East. If you help me I will act, and if not, the elections will come and I will have to focus on them.”

Lt. Gen. William G. Boykin: “George Bush was not elected by a majority of the voters in the United States, he was appointed by God.”

Beverly LaHaye (Concerned Women for America): “Yes, religion and politics do mix. America is a nation based on biblical principles. Christian values dominate our government. The test of those values is the Bible. Politicians who do not use the bible to guide their public and private lives do not belong in office.”

Jerry Falwell (1933-2007): “We’re fighting against humanism, we’re fighting against liberalism...we are fighting against all the systems of Satan that are destroying our nation today...our battle is with Satan himself.”

J. B. Stoner (White Supremacist—1924-2005): “We had lost the fight for the preservation of the white race until God himself intervened in earthly affairs with AIDS to rescue and preserve the white race that he had created.... I praise God all the time for AIDS.”

Jesse Helms (Senator-R-NC): “Your tax dollars are being used to pay for grade-school classes that teach our children that cannibalism, wife-swapping and murder of infants and the elderly are acceptable behaviour.”

James Dobson (Focus on the Family): “State Universities are breeding grounds, quite literally, for sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV), homosexual behavior, unwanted pregnancies, abortions, alcoholism, and drug abuse.”

Pat Buchanan (Presidential Candidate): “Rail as they will about ‘discrimination,’ women are simply not endowed by nature with the same measures of single-minded ambition and the will to succeed in the fiercely competitive world of Western capitalism.”

Pat Robertson (Christian Coalition): “The feminist agenda is not about equal rights for women. It is about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice

witchcraft, destroy capitalism, and become lesbians.”

TheoCon Philosophy In Review

And Coulter, Falwell, Bush, Robertson et al. reveal both the shallowness of their intellects and their gene pools; and it must be understood that the people quoted above are simply the public voice for the conservative Catholic Church and the Evangelical Christian Right in America. Let us put a fitting end to such venomous nonsense. How can the above invective not represent a type of pathology, plagued with its tangential logic and moral turpitude? When will we abandon hatred as the governing principle for our civilizations?

As you read the above moribund madness, did you laugh? Did you cry? Or did you get angry enough to ensure that extreme fundamentalism never finds acceptance. Like Osama Bin Laden and George Walker Bush, theocons are not evil, but they are certainly dangerous. Literalists—deeply devout Koranic and Biblical theocons—claim to have read and understood texts about which they obviously know little. Reading does not necessarily bring knowledge and wisdom to the reader. These theocons believe that they must destroy our world in order to save us . . . from whom? Them?

Believe what they will, but the fundamentalists should know this—their belief does not constitute our reality. We know these beliefs and these gods, created in fear, ignorance, blind obedience, and superstition (FIBS, so to speak). We have witnessed theocratic intolerance, first hand, for our entire lives.

We know history; it is not a secret. We went to church when we were young. We read the same books; sang the same hymns; worshipped the same gods. But we also went to school, where we studied language, science, mathematics, history, philosophy, etc. Now, we choose knowledge, and continue learning. The intellect withers and free will atrophies, if unexercised.

Tyrannical, theocratic absolutism, in all of its forms, sanctioned the genocide in Canaan and the Old Testament wars, the Roman and all Empires, slavery, the Inquisition, the Reformation, the Counter Reformation; the genocide of aboriginal peoples; apartheid; segregation, residential schools; spousal and child abuse; poverty and homelessness; and continues to sanction the intolerance that underlies all that is despicable in this world. This is history, not fiction, or myth.

Five thousand years of history have witnessed the carnage, and the anthropological record establishes that pre-history was little different. We know the story, because we are that story; we are but the present chapter of this redundant, epic farce.


Jimmy Swaggart opined that, “Evolution is a bankrupt speculative philosophy, not a scientific fact. Only a spiritually bankrupt society could ever believe it... Only atheists could accept this Satanic theory.”

Evolutionary biology remains the sole, logical theory; Darwin remains right. And reason triumphed.

References:

¹ For further enlightenment go to http://adultthought.ucsd.edu/Culture_War/The_American_Taliban.html

² Zeitgeist. n. spirit of the times



WRITE A CAPTION !!! WIN A PRIZE !!!

What’s going on here, what are these people saying? Submit your ideas to 1027 Pandora, or to a Street Newz vendor – someone will win a gift certificate to the Good Earth store!

Bear (Spaet) Mountain Interchange Update:
Destruction slated for December

By Zoe Blunt

Chainsaws, bulldozers, and blasting are on the way. Are we ready?

Now is the time to get involved. According to city staff and engineers, tree clearing for the Bear Mountain Interchange will begin in early December, followed by road grading in January and overpass construction in March.

The alignment for the three-lane road was moved slightly to the east, which engineers claim will miss Langford Lake Cave by 20 meters. It is not clear if the cave will be damaged by drilling and blasting, or if the road grade will destroy part of the 40-meter-long cavity.

The new highway alignment puts the road much closer to Spencer’s Pond. It will destroy the forest on its western edge, which is crucial habitat for Pacific tree frogs and red-legged frogs. The new highway will also kill many red-legged frogs and habitat for screech owls, great horned owls, pileated woodpeckers, and dozens of other species.

The first phase of construction is a north-south connector linking Bear Mountain Parkway with Goldstream Avenue and Highway 1, plus on-ramps on the north and east sides of Leigh Road. The new highway is three lanes wide in most places, and up to five lanes wide near the overpass. See high resolution image here: http://farm3.static.flickr.com/2128/1821229691_dfe3bbec56_b.jpg.

Phase Two will add the cloverleaf to the west of Leigh Road, south of the highway where the tree sit camp is located. No timeline has been assigned to the second phase of the interchange.

What does this mean?

We can expect to see new property markers, flagging tape and painted blazes in the forest. The first work crews that come in will cut down all the trees in the right of way and haul them out. The timber is a “gift” to the Esquimalt First Nation.



After all the trees are cut down, bulldozers, rock drills and blasting equipment will level the landscape. The rise at the end of Leigh Road will be blasted out and the wetlands below will be filled in to even the grade. A substantial amount of fill will be needed on the downhill side, as the grade will join to an overpass over the highway. Habitat will be destroyed and fragmented.

The sit camp is about 40 meters outside of the right of way, but the city may need to evict the campers anyway because of tree-falling safety rules. Anyone blocking the way can expect to have court documents served on them or possibly be arrested for trespassing. There is information about civil disobedience at the camp.

Those defending the forest and the cave will use every available peaceful means to stop or delay construction. Please come to the tree sit at the north end of Leigh Road, half a kilometer west of Spencer Road and Goldstream Avenue in Langford. Action is needed now, and experienced activists are especially encouraged to apply.

ZoeBlunt@gmail.com
More info, maps and directions: treesit.blogspot.com,
interchangeconsultation.blogspot.com



From The Boondocks:
They Took No Note

By Ceritanne



I am not a Christian. I’m an of-the-earth well-read Pagan, who after reading an article about the melting slopes of Everest where the sons of famous mountain climbers Hillary and Tenzing speak out about climate change saying, “Believe us, it’s a reality,” was reminded of a passage in the Bible. Peter Hillary and Jamling Tenzing issued a timely warning that global warming is rapidly changing the face of the planets highest mountain and threatening the survival of billions of people who rely on its glaciers for drinking water.

Quoting from the article, “The glacial retreat presents a double peril for those who live in the Himalayas and the populations of India and China, where the water flowing from the mountains accounts for 40 per cent of the world’s fresh water.”

Why is it a “double peril?” “The rapid increase in the rate of glaciers melting... has resulted in the formation of huge lakes in the space of a few years.”

How is that dangerous? The article continues, “A United Nations study of the 9,000 glacial lakes in the Himalayas found that more than 200 are at risk of ‘outburst floods,’ unleashing thousands of cubic metres of water per second into an area where 40,000 people live. In 1985, Lake Dig Tsho in the Everest region released 10 million cubic metres of water in three hours. It caused a 10-metre-high wall of water which swept away a power station, bridges, farmland, houses, livestock and people up to 55 miles downstream. Scientists estimate that the most dangerous lakes today are up to 20 times bigger. One of those, Imja Tsho, did not exist 50 years ago and lies directly above the homes of 10,000 people. The worst-case scenario according to Nepalese scientists is a cascade effect whereby one overflowing lake empties into another, starting a chain reaction which would kill thousands and wipe out agriculture for generations.”

Peter Hillary said: “I’ve seen the result of glacial lakes bursting their banks and it’s just catastrophic. It’s like an atomic bomb has gone off. Everywhere is rubble. The floods of the past are unfortunately nothing compared with the size of what we are currently threatened with.”

The so far relatively unaffected people of the First World shrug, hop in their SUVs and carry on in their daily activities. What is wrong with us? We should be putting forth a universal concerted effort to make changes to help heal the planet instead of “business as usual.” What do we get from our fearless “leaders?” Stephen Harper’s Conservatives, including one of the BC MPs, have told us explicitly to use more energy efficient light bulbs. Huh? Well, that’s a no brainer. Certainly though only a miniscule tip of the huge global warming iceberg, as our ever-so-illustrious Prime Minister sets a glowing example jetting from continent to continent to hang wreaths on dead men’s tombs while he uses up valuable resources provoking hostilities in a foreign land.

The moral behind the Jewish flood story of Noah’s Ark is found in the Bible book of Matthew and reads, “For just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be. For as they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and they took no note until the flood came and swept them all away...”

“They took no note.” The Himalayan Mountain glaciers are melting away. The polar icecaps are dissolving. Temperatures are rising. Greenland will soon be green. Antarctic ice shelves are breaking off and dropping into the ocean and it’s hotter than the hinges of Hades in Siberia. Italy and California are/were on fire, there’s a Pine Beetle epidemic in BC, Australia is bone dry and unparalleled storms have ruined food crops in Britain² still, “they take no note.”

So, it looks like down through the millennia, the human condition has basically remained unchanged, self-interest prevails. Job, home, family, breakfast, lunch, dinner, a beer in front of the boob tube, a yawn reflex is garnered until an actual wall of water threatens.

Noah may have been nothing more than a naturalist, a weatherman or an activist. Who listened to him? As the story goes, following the flood how many people were left? Only Noah, his wife, his three sons & their three wives...no one outside of the family paid any attention until the floodwaters started rising and then you can bet they were beating down the doors!

Flash forward to December 2007 as the masses prepare to celebrate the birth of a man who was born over 2,000 years ago...a man who threw the money lenders and money changers out of the temple and any thinking person can’t help but see the irony of it all. The man named Jesus Christ threw the crass economic bottom liners out of the holy place while today’s modern shoppers support the money lenders, keeping them alive and well while the Most Holy of Places, our Precious Mother Earth, is torn asunder and who is taking any note?

The son of a true man of Peace, Julian Lennon, in his song “Saltwater³” asks of all humanity, “What will I think of me the day that I die?” Indeed, what will I think of me if I don’t even try; if I don’t turn my back on the status quo which is destroying what I love the most, my home, your home, Mother Earth?

References:

¹ http://environment.independent.co.uk/climate_change/article2739751.ece
² http://environment.independent.co.uk/climate_change/article2737135.ece
³ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OD_8E4bxtmc

Minimum Standards

I listened to a radio program today wherein there was a discussion about the humane treatment of farm animals. I learned that the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies monitors such things as the nutrition and housing system of sows and laying hens. I ask myself why there is a minimum standard for farm animals when increasing numbers of Canadians are living on the street and nobody gives a damn.

So I’m proposing a minimum standard for Canadian human beings. They should get a wooden crate for shelter, 2 blankets, a pillow, and a bowl of gruel a day. Sounds awful, doesn’t it? But that is more than they have now.

There is enormous wealth in Canada, and it should be distributed more evenly. It’s not right when a Credit Union Loans Officer gets a \$10,000 bonus, and a sick man sleeps in a doorway, and perhaps freezes to death in the night.

Madeline Bruce, Nanaimo

Dear Couz, by Jennifer Hastie

One day last fall on a Saturday, Couz, we were up in Duncan. We went to a public meeting, put on by the natives, to tell us how the treaty talks were going in their area.

The meeting was held on the traditional lands of the Cowichan Tribes, the “Hulqumi’num,” as these guys are called. There were also treaty people from Port Alberni, Campbell River, Quadra Island, and the small reserve of Ditidaht. We got a good lunch, too, yum yum!

I was expecting to learn that things were coming along fine, even though progress is slow. Unfortunately, I learned that the Feds were continually stalling by refusing to respect a court decision that natives have rights to the land. Couz, this idea was established by the Courts when the Nisga’a were negotiating, only a few years ago.

Here is some history for you, Couz: ‘way back, when Governor James Douglas was here in the 1850s, he was trying to manage newcomers--that was us Whities--as well as the local native population. Native visitors would also travel from the north and south to Victoria in their huge canoes. You see, even in those days the Victoria area was always thought to be a good place to live! Douglas managed to put 12 small treaties into place around Victoria, Nanaimo, and Fort Rupert (Port Hardy), plus a small one ‘way up in northern B.C. After that, apparently, the Brits ran out of money and oomph to make further Treaties. Basically, at least here in B.C., nothing more was really done about who owns the land.

Slowly, the native land was being taken away by newcomers who wanted to farm. Not a great situation for the local natives, eh, Couz. I would sure hate to have someone sitting at the end of my property, planting crops, building a house and moving ever closer to me....

When Pierre Trudeau brought back our Constitution from the Queen in 1982—no kidding, that recently, Couz--he made sure that native rights would be protected. The other important fact is, of course, that the Supreme Court in Canada came to the conclusion during the Nisga’a Land Claims—in 1998 they were finally completed—that our natives DO have rights that predate the coming of the white man.

So, it seems to me, Couz, that “BC” and “Canada,” the two levels of government that are taking part in the Treaty negotiations, are supposed to be respecting the position of our natives: that is, if those government guys respect our Canadian court system.

I learned that this respect is not happening. What? All that time being wasted in the last 13 years? All that money to pay those negotiators who (you can bet) have huge expense accounts on top of huge salaries? What’s going on here?

The story, from the natives’ viewpoint, gets worse. Apparently Sheila Fraser, our heroine over in Ottawa who has uncovered lots of pilfering of our money by government employees, even SHE has apparently said that the court decision mentioned above has no grounding in Canada’s legal framework.

I feel as if our government has really let us down, all of us, because they refuse to accept the law of the land. We are all going to suffer, Couz. First, it’s not fair to the natives; second, it stops people from doing business here which will bring in money for B.C.

I am embarrassed to see the bad reputation that Canada is getting in the rest of the world because we treat our very own First Nations’ peoples so badly. We Canadians have always taken pride in our world-wide reputation for being humane. I guess that humanness just applies to immigrants, not natives.

The facts get worse, Couz. Reserves, for example: In B.C., the average reserve is half the size of the average one

in Canada, and one-fortieth the size of an average one in the USA. Also, the Feds are apparently refusing to accept the fact that there are huge number of natives out there who are not so-called “status Indians.” It seems that the Feds are just ignoring a whole bunch of Canada’s population when they refuse to consider this large group of natives.

Something else bad is happening too with the treaty talks. Some tribes are getting fed up with the talks because they cannot make the Feds accept the fact that they are equal to them at the Treaty Table. Many tribes are losing interest in talking to the Feds. For example, up Port Alberni way, there were once 14 tribes together at the Treaty Table. Now there are only seven. Some tribes have gone off and signed on their own. Others, like the Ditidaht, are negotiating on their own. The Nuu-Chah-Nulth themselves have quit negotiating. Up Campbell River way, only 3 out of 15 tribes are left to negotiate. THEN, the Feds have apparently said to them: Do you REALLY think that we are going to change national policy for just 300 people? How do these Feds manage to sleep at night?

Is this a way of the Feds’ asserting power over the Natives? It makes me wonder. Certainly, the natives believe that it is “divide and conquer,” a much used way of winning at battle. Wouldn’t you believe that yourself if you were a native person?

I ask myself: Do the natives really want anything that is so out-of-line? I know that many of us non-natives worry that we are going to be kicked off our lands. Although that is an ugly rumour, it is NOT the case. Natives have always agreed to “private lands not being on the table.” In the case of the Cowichan Tribes, they are really in a bind, because just about all their land lies in and around Duncan. That group is hoping that some of the big E&N railway land rights can be part of their settlement package.

Natives also want to be involved in decisions regarding water, land, fish. How can those talks even happen if the Feds refuse to honour Supreme Court decisions in favour of native rights? And meanwhile, crown lands, the lands that the government still has in their charge, are getting eroded away by logging and other big business interests.

Another ugly non-native rumour is that the tribes are asking for all of their traditional lands back. That’s B.S., Couz. Natives may point out what was once the whole of their territory, but that’s said just to make a political point, not what they will settle for today.

Part of treaty talks apparently always involves taxation. Fair enough, as it’s a sore point for most of us non-natives, right? Well, right now, most native tribes don’t even own their own land, as the Feds still “own” their reserves. It’s pretty hard to tax them on what they don’t own! Personal taxes are another matter, though, aren’t they, Couz. I know

that this whole taxation problem bothers you a lot, Couz; it does me too. (Most of us love our money, right?) Well, both the Nisga’a Treaty and the new Ma’nulth treaty have agreed to phase in personal income taxes for their people. Sales tax for those who presently live on reserve will happen within just a few years, once the land claims have been settled.

Finally, what do the Natives want from us non-native types today? At this point they want us to write protest letters to the Feds. I am

appalled that the Feds don’t respect our legal system. What a poor example they set for the average Canadian. I am ashamed to be represented by them.

Please write and complain, Couz. You don’t even have to put a stamp on the letter if it goes to the Minister of Department of Indian & Northern Affairs, or if it goes to your Member of Parliament in Ottawa.

Jennifer and her husband live in Victoria today. She is a healthy, active senior who enjoys writing volunteer articles for various publications.



PIRATES OF THE PACIFIC SEARCH FOR HOUSING TREASURE

by Wendy Pedersen Carnegie Community Action Project, Vancouver

Carnegie kitchen volunteers James and Dominic, along with CCAP volunteers Harold (see dapper pirate gent below), Robert and Hendrik were stars of the swashbuckling street theatre at a bank in Victoria recently. Dressed as colourful “Homes for All” Buccaneers, our local heroes arrived by canoe to confront government pirates hoarding \$250 million in a bank for the measly \$10 million a year interest it is supposed to collect.



Danita’s son, shown in picture below, marched with supporters to the bank to watch the performance with CCAP, Power of Women, the Aboriginal Front Door, VANDU, the DTES Neighbourhood House, BCPWA, Citywide Housing Coalition and Committee to End Homelessness in Victoria.



Thousands of British Columbians are homeless while the BC government refuses to spend its \$250 million “housing endowment fund” on new social housing. “They are making interest off the backs of the poor by not spending the \$250 million fund on housing,” said Jacob Rikley, member of Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users and CCAP. This \$250 million could be the down payment on the 3200 units promised for the Olympics (total cost \$640 mil) and virtually end homelessness in Vancouver.

“Locking up this fund shows a lack of compassion for the homeless” said Phil Whonnock, elder from Aboriginal Front Door, “it’s just an other excuse to say “NO” to us.”



An interview with Malalai Joya -
ousted Member of Parliament from Afghanistan
by Chris Cook

On October 28 2007, at a Victoria demonstration marking the Pan-Canadian Day of Action Against War, CFUV's Gorilla Radio host spoke with Malalai Joya about the situation in Afghanistan.

Chris Cook: Welcome to Canada. Last week our state broadcaster, the CBC, released findings of a public opinion poll they said was taken in Afghanistan saying that largely the Afghani people support Canada's there. Does that ring true to you?

Malalai Joya: First of all I want to tell you this survey is just a lie. I believe that around Afghanistan the survey didn't happen. I know the history of our country, and our country does not accept occupation – they want liberation. The US attacked Afghanistan because of its own strategies and policies. The only hope of our people is the European countries, those like Canada who have troops in Afghanistan, that they must act independently and don't follow the policies of the US which is a mockery of democracy and a mockery of war on terror.

Today, our people, they are too afraid that if these troops go out from Afghanistan once again civil war will start because today our people are between two powerful enemies: one is anti-US terrorists who are Taliban and on the other hand are pro-US terrorists who are Northern Alliance and our people are victims between these two enemies like a sandwich. If they go out once again Afghanistan civil war will start but if they stay in Afghanistan and continue the strong policies of the US, a different September 11 will happen. Please support pressure on your government to support democratic minded peoples' policies in Afghanistan. We need a helping hand, we don't want occupation. Today our country has been occupied. Security is more important than food an water.

I want to send my condolences to the families who lost their peers in Afghanistan ... they must join their hands with us and pressure their government to act independently and support democratic minded people in Afghanistan.

I believe if they continue with the strong policies in Afghanistan they will face the resistance of our people as once Russian people and also English people faced. Our history shows that no nation can donate liberation to another nation.

Chris: One question further - the Americans have said that they want to start a drug eradication program for the poppies in Afghanistan. We've seen the heroin coming out of Afghanistan since the occupation began has increased, not decreased, now they're talking about spraying the fields of Afghanistan much as the Americans do in Columbia. What's your opinion about poppy cultivation and this American plan for so-called eradication.

Malalai: according to the UN, 93% of heroin comes out of Afghanistan. Today Afghanistan is one of the biggest producers. In a century when our president was first confronted, he said the international community also has hands there. Even the drugs are found on the streets of New York. Of course, from this situation, we have non-democratic government and the governments of foreign countries make use of this situation. Not only US comes in Afghanistan because of its own strategies, but its allies follow the policy and neighbouring countries like Iran, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Russia, they also make use of this situation – on the one hand support the Taliban and on the other hand support the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. So I ask you is it possible to, with the support of drug lords, stop the planting of opium in a country like Afghanistan? It's possible with sworn enemies of women's rights and democracy, they come into power to bring values like women's rights, democracy and security, the US wants to keep the situation like this to have a reason and excuse to be more in Afghanistan because of their own strategy policy.

They deceived their people and Canada and other countries that have groups in Afghanistan ... they are not telling about the reality. They do not support democratic minded people and parties in Afghanistan ... they follow the policies of the US.



Well Stocked

by Brian Mason

Inertia is a powerful property. It's what makes it hard to get objects moving in the first place and, once moving, what tends to keep them going in the same direction at the same speed as they started out. Unfortunately, inertia, a well known concept in physics, also dominates the socio-political realm, with devastating consequences for us all.

In the face of not-quite-yet overwhelming warning signals telling us to fundamentally change our ways – signs like climate change, over-population, widening gaps between rich and poor, and growing international tensions, to name a few – we do little to save ourselves. Why the collective reluctance? It's all about political and economic power.

Some thinkers, such as Uvic political scientist Kera Shaw or entrepreneur-turned-environmentalist Paul Hawken, argue that political power is quickly passing from national or regional governments to the converging social justice and environmental movements. Hawken has described this convergence as the largest social movement in history as well as the fastest growing. It, in turn, is challenging the corporate sector in the race to “rule the world.” In some mysterious way, they argue, the millions of people worldwide networking from their computer terminals and gathering for worthy causes are the real drivers of social, economic and political change. Together with corporations, this new blend of global power will supposedly determine the shape of the world. It assumes some gentle meeting of the minds among this so-called movement, some indefinable level of synergy and synchronicity that will miraculously save the planet. Oh, were it true, even a little bit.

The Shaws and Hawkens of the world are wrong, however, because they have over-discounted the inertial properties of two of the main pillars of our capitalist civilisation: stock markets and national governments.

Stock markets, although small, rudimentary ones have been around for a few hundred years, have only become a defining economic force in the twentieth century. If you doubt this, recall the effect of the stock market crash in 1929 or of the bursting of the dot.com bubble in 2000. Over the past two decades, technology has redefined and further entrenched the fundamental importance of stock markets to the raging unstopability of market capitalism. What began as a relatively simple and straightforward tool to raise capital and spread risk has, like everything else to do with capitalism, become an untethered monster.

Today, stock markets are anything but simple and straightforward. They are money markets and hedge funds, derivatives, futures and arbitrage, mutual funds, stocks, bonds, RRSPs and, perhaps most important, they are pension funds and mortgages. They are the stuff of banks, insurance companies, credit unions and financial planners. They are T-bills, GICs and government bonds. In short, they are everywhere your money lands. Stock markets, in other words, lock in the future prospects of everyone's financial “well-being.” We are all entangled in them.

But stock markets are merciless. Their single-minded focus on the next quarterly financial report and tomorrow's stock price is what drive corporate stupidity and the undoing of the planet. Stock markets, in all their wild and greedy dimensions, have no meaningful boundaries. There's no “hidden hand” guiding them toward the achievement of social or environmental good. Our civilisation cannot afford to see them fail, let alone slow down to give it time for reflection. As a proxy for our financial systems and economic growth, stock markets have become a juggernaut of inertia which we dare not disturb lest the whole edifice crumbles. They are, after all, based on a huge, collective blind faith in the amorphous global capitalist system.

The other inertial pillar of our civilisation is the government apparatus of sovereign states. Rumours of its relative demise have been greatly exaggerated. The power of government is absolute, has not been diminished (though it may, for the time being, be in league with some corporations in some countries), and is exercised as often as needed to protect its supremacy or its sovereignty. Never forget that government sets the rules by which we are all coerced to play, whether in democracies, oligarchies or dictatorships. It is, moreover, backed up by the threat or use of massive force.

If you think the power of nation-states has been eclipsed by the converging social justice and environmental movements or by the influence of corporations, think again. Remember what just one national government, admittedly a powerful one, that of George “Dubya,” has done to control and devastate the lives of so many people. Or consider the emerging power of the Chinese government, which has been steadily and quietly building alliances throughout Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia. Or the reflexive, growing threat of a rejuvenated Russia which, as it begins to again butt heads with the arrogant United States, is taking us towards Cold War redux. Here at home, of course, Stephen Harper has been let loose. Government matters.

I personally most feel the ominous power of my government whenever I am protesting for peace or trying to save old growth forests. That's when I am being videotaped by big men in uniform, watched from above by a police helicopter, or confronted by a cordon of well-armed police. During the September protest against the meeting of NATO generals in Victoria, for instance, police far outnumbered demonstrators. Their weaponry was palpable and ominously on display. Was it their fear of the Raging Grannies? I don't think so. It was, rather, a routine display of state power, just to remind us who is in charge of things.

Stock markets and state governments need and support one another. Together, these two pillars of our self-destructive civilisation have sufficient inertia to prevent us deviating too far or too fast from business as usual. Not only will they not let up, they control our money and all the weaponry that matters. Keep shopping, and Merry Christmas.

Submitted by Brian Mason, a writer and philosopher who lives in James Bay.


Dear Readers
RED AGAIN !!
Those who read my articles know these are my own observations.
WHERE DID IT GO?!!
You're asking, "what's he talking about?" Clue - it went too fast. Try this year. It wasn't the best, but there were good times as well as bad. First thing that comes to mind is the weather. What happened to that? Cold, windy, rainy, and a little bit of sun. It wasn't a banner year, but remember every day you wake up is a good one. The seasons came and went but I am still here. Good or bad, the world still rotates.

One of the bad things that did happen was the loss of a lot of my friends that I've partied and hung around with. They're gone. We always looked out for each other. They will be sadly missed. As for some, they're just hanging on, so they can hope to see the new year. Let's just hope that things will get better.

But on an up note, we must also thank the people who have made it possible to be where we are now. Doctors, lawyers, out-street workers, food banks, etc. You all know who you are, so take a bow. We all thank you for your generosity and patience. And the kindness you have shown us for being there when we least expected it. I for one am not alone when it comes to saying THANKS !!

Yours Truly, Red

p.s. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



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one bin at a time.

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**With the Windows Dirty
It's Hard to See Straight Through**

Windows dirty it's hard to see right through
Even with wipers soap and de-mister now
Dim light and smoked eyes tire
Too long the road the distance far
Crows as carrion eat entrails still warm and moist
A bright ghost light of sun through the everglade
Gravel spits tire hits and knocks them off the cuff
Ditches full of flotsam shopping cart in deepening ditch
The pitch black way out back in dense damp growth
A frog in the throat dry cough almost choke and choke
The spokes of one dark bicycle spoke climbs slope
The many hills flat cut treeless continue growing
The constant glow of one slow cigarette flicked on down
Tired old ash falls nearby dashboard dustpile grows
The awkward curve slight rise in tar-macadam
Burst from the road the mouth of one dead salmon
Bones piled in sticks on the edge of the shiny white plate
Memory plays with future questions fate
Old gnarled hand of old washed hands
Wrapped tight one fist held warm in one tight fist
Driver looks down with car light reads shopping list
Picture on top of the page of a listing sailing ship
Imperceptible sound almost crunch of gravel
Feet walk sidewalk talk on crushed leaves dead lank weeds
In the fog one orange fog light an old spit of roasting glow
Footlights brighten gaze it widens to new start of day
Half frozen talk cold hands rub bring red blood to the surface
Crows give an earful of squawking to the still - still sleeping
In the keeping place on the surface of grain bags books to read
Put the glasses on turn on the light turn to last page read
At the end of the day with much to read a page is marked
Embark for sleep and pillow talk stare the candle flame off
In dreams tumbling a dryer warming entering deeper sleep
Step deep in night slow breath safe and tight wake refreshed

They say now it's morning

© Paul Burnside, Nov 6 07

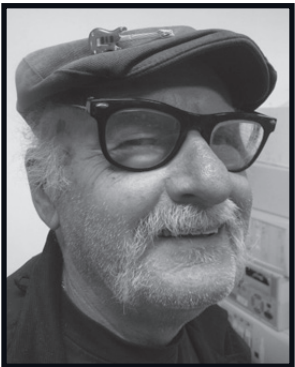


editor's note: Paul has \$35 (thanks to Vicki, Jen, and anonymous) towards his 'new front tooth'! If you'd like to contribute, please donate directly to his account (it's in his name - Paul Burnside) at the Cool Aid Dental Clinic 469 Swift Street, 383-5957. Or, send a cheque to Street Newz specifying it's for Paul Burnside's tooth.

Mental Health

They are calling poor man lazy
social misfit and crazy.
Not knowing that poverty
can not be a benefit
to anyone's mental health.

And they are keeping on
increasing their wealth.
On the account of those
whom
they are criticizing.



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Poppy Prayer

possibly
peace
inevitably centering
on
tender peace
with
forgiveness
and
forbearance
in
Remembrance:
to have lived
not in vain
not wasting Love
not wasting
precious ammunition
precious resources
precious
"once in your lifetime"
moments to end all
moments
just a minute!
a silent minute
for peace.
at the Centre:
the Peace is coming.
still.
let it be.

Jane P. Brett

Poppy Prayer was
first tied to the
Nanoose CFMETR fence
on Remembrance Day 1994



Top Ten Winners in the
International Pun
Contest:

1. A vulture boards an airplane, carrying two dead raccoons. The stewardess looks at him and says, "I'm sorry, sir, only one carrion allowed per passenger."
2. Two fish swim into a concrete wall. The one turns to the other and says "Dam!"
3. Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, so they lit a fire in the craft. Unsurprisingly it sank, proving once again that you can't have your kayak and heat it too.
4. Two hydrogen atoms meet. One says "I've lost my electron." The other says "Are you sure?" The first replies "Yes, I'm positive."
5. Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused Novocain during a root canal? His goal: transcend dental medication.
6. A group of chess enthusiasts checked into a hotel and were standing in the lobby discussing their recent tournament victories. After about an hour, the manager came out of the office and asked them to disperse. "But why,?" they asked as they moved off. "Because," he said, "I can't stand chess-nuts boasting in an open foyer."
7. A woman has twins and gives them up for adoption. One of them goes to a family in Egypt and is named "Ahmal." The other goes to a family in Spain; they name him "Juan." Years later, Juan sends a picture of himself to his birth mother. Upon receiving the picture, she tells her husband that she wishes she also had a picture of Ahmal. Her husband responds, "They're twins! If you've seen Juan, you've seen Ahmal."
8. A group of friars were behind on their belfry payments, so they opened up a small florist shop to raise funds. Since everyone liked to buy flowers from the men of God, a rival florist across town thought the competition was unfair. He asked the good fathers to close down, but they would not. He went back and begged the friars to close. They ignored him. So, the rival florist hired Hugh MacTaggart, the roughest and most vicious thug in town to "persuade" them to close. Hugh beat up the friars and trashed their store, saying he'd be back if they didn't close up shop. Terrified, they did so, thereby proving that only Hugh can prevent florist friars.
9. Mahatma Gandhi, as you know, walked barefoot most of the time, which produced an impressive set of calluses on his feet. He also ate very little, which made him rather frail and, with his odd diet, he suffered from bad breath. This made him a super calloused fragile mystic hexed by halitosis.
10. And finally, there was the person who sent ten different puns to friends, with the hope that at least one of the puns would make them laugh. No pun in ten did.

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Wanna Help?

If you're interested in volunteering, please contact Janine at 383-5144 ext 0137

Maybe you can help

- * with office stuff?
- * with outreach to community and church groups?
- * encouraging new vendors?
- * writing grants?



Sean



Debbie



Ken



Shirley



Berni



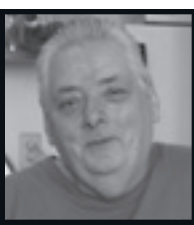
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John



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or visit him at his "office" outside Coast Capital near Fort on Douglas Street.

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Vendors pay 50 cents for each Street Newz. Together, this pays for the Street Newz printing costs.



Anything you give, in excess of 50 cents, goes directly to the low income vendor who works to distribute the paper.

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ear muffs, toques,
gloves, warm socks,
holeless boots,
long johns, umbrellas

Behind the Scenez

Street Newz is a project of the Bread and Roses Collective - a registered not-for profit society. Its purpose is to support educational and employment opportunities for socially disadvantaged and/or economically marginalized people, provide information about and support community organizations concerned with the relief of poverty and the promotion of public education, and support and encourage community based artistic endeavours that enhance our collective quality of life.

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Fundraising Newz

In addition to the Victoria Street Newz, I (Janine) publish the 'Left Coast' - a weekly email e-newsletter containing information about peace, environment, and justice event information. To subscribe (it's free) send email to streetnewz@islandnet.com.

I also produce a radio show at CFUV, the 'Winds of Change', alternating Thursdays from 11-noon.

The Street Newz pays me \$700 a month, from grant, subscription, advertising, and donation money we collect through the non-profit Bread and Roses Collective.

I'm in the process of writing a business plan and searching for grant applications. Grants typically take several months to finalize and are never a guarantee.

If you appreciate alternative media, and haven't donated lately, please consider supporting this independent, unembedded work by buying a calendar (see pg 11), subscribing, or donating. Gifts & services & discounts are also appreciated.

Thanks for your support!

THE SNZ BOOKS

	Sept	Oct	Nov
Street Newz Revenue			
Paper Sales (from vendors)	570.00	600.00	580.00
Donations	131.00	140.00	1405.00
Gifts (incl in-kind)	225.00	80.00	50.00
Advertising	0.00	20.00	0.00
Subscriptions	280.00	105.00	210.00
Bread & Roses Donation to SNZ	700.00	700.00	700.00
Total Street Newz Revenue	1906.00	1645.00	2945.00
Street Newz Expenses			
Salaries	700.00	700.00	700.00
Paper & Printing Costs	571.34	571.34	742.00
Office expenses/website	200.00	55.84	16.00
Postage	85.41	99.13	96.71
Total Street Newz Expenses	1556.75	1426.31	1554.71
Street Newz	349.25	218.69	1390.29
Bread & Roses Revenue			
Grants	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Bread & Roses Revenue	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bread & Roses Expenses			
Bus Tickets (2 for 1)	40.50	40.50	40.50
Street Newz Donation	700.00	700.00	700.00
Total Bread & Roses Expenses	740.50	740.50	740.50
Bread & Roses	-740.50	-740.50	-740.50
Consolidated Total (Street Newz + B&R)	-391.25	-521.81	649.79
Bread & Roses Bank Balance	2076.48	2152.72	2766.81

A gigantic THANK YOU !!

1800 December Street Newzes are brought to you by:

New or Renewed Subscribers: Linda Roberts, Don Parker, Gerrit Gerritsen, Valerie Williams, Andrea Wilmot, Christina Nikolic

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And anyone I may have forgotten - thanks, it wouldn't be the same without you.

INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION

Victoria Street Newz is a proud member of the North American Street Newspaper Association and the International Network of Street Papers. The mission of NASNA is to support a street newspaper movement that creates and upholds journalistic and ethical standards while promoting self-help and empowerment among people living in poverty. INSP is an umbrella organization that provides a consultancy service for its partner papers and advises on the setting up of new street papers and supports initiatives for marginalized people. Visit NASNA at www.nasna.org or the INSP at www.street-papers.org.

TO PLEDGE YOUR SUPPORT

Street Newz does not have charitable status, so we can't issue tax receipts. We do, however, offer various subscription options:

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